

Mr. Speaker, it is no wonder that this House only brings legislation to the floor that benefits the wealthiest few in our Nation, because these are the people who are in TOM DELAY's black book. The House Republican leadership has heard that the American people are struggling to afford skyrocketing gas prices, so what do they do? House Republicans pass an energy law this summer that even the Bush administration admits will do nothing to lower gas prices for the American consumer. Instead, the energy law provided billions of dollars in tax breaks for oil and gas companies, and these are companies that are already experiencing record profits.

What about the American people? Well, as Alter explains in the *Time* Magazine article, they are not in the Republican leadership's black book and so their concerns really don't matter to the Republican leadership.

Mr. Speaker, whether you are in New Jersey or wherever you happen to be, the American people do not like what is happening here in Washington. They see examples of cronyism in every Republican corridor and they want it to stop. The American people want us to get back to addressing their needs and their concerns. It is time for the House Republican leaders to throw away their special interest black books like the one that TOM DELAY has so they can finally listen to the real needs and concerns of ordinary Americans.

IRAQI ELECTIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Saturday was a great day in American history. It was a great day in international history. And for those of us that do not read *Time* Magazine, it was a great day for democracy.

The Iraqi elections came off Saturday. The results are still coming in. We do not know all that occurred. But there are great things that already can be gleaned from what happened. The Iraqis showed an extraordinary amount of courage. Whereas in America on election day we have people who say, I don't know if I can brave going down and standing in line for 5 or 10 minutes. That may be more than I can handle.

Or, gee, the traffic is kind of heavy today. I don't know if I am going to go vote. I don't know, it looks like it might rain. I may catch the next election.

Not in Iraq. The Iraqis had the opportunity to vote on a constitution. They had an opportunity to vote for governing themselves for the first time in the history of mankind in what many acknowledge to be the cradle of humanity, where mankind began, and they came out and voted.

When I was in Iraq earlier this year, it was after the January elections, and

they talked in terms of 8 by 11 flyers that were posted all over the countryside, around the voting areas, that simply said, If You Vote, You Die. Those people that voted knew they were going to have to dip their fingers into permanent blue ink that would be on their fingers for probably a couple or 3 weeks. They knew they could be targets by what they had marked on their fingers. Yet they had the courage to step forward.

Some of the things people do not hear and do not read because not all magazines give you all the facts, but there were many places where Iraqi policemen stepped up to protect the voters. These were not American soldiers. These were not American police. They were Iraqis protecting Iraqis who had developed national pride in what they were trying to accomplish. I did not hear it on any of the media, I certainly did not read it in *Time* Magazine, but there were a couple of policemen who gave their lives in stepping forward and trying to protect voters. I was told by the Iraqis when I was over there, the voters never got out of line because they realized if they got out of line from voting and ran for cover, those guys that died protecting them while they tried to vote would have died for nothing, much like if we cut and ran from Iraq before this process is finished, then those valiant, brave people whose names we have just heard more of would have died for nothing. Thank God we have a President who is seeing this through to the end.

There was an additional policeman, I was told by Iraqis, who found a suicide bomber in the voting place. He grabbed him, rushed him outside, threw him to the ground, threw himself on top of him and they were both killed in the ensuing explosion. Nobody got out of line, they told me, because they knew that would have meant that the policeman died for nothing. They stayed, they voted, and thank God they have some great days ahead. It is not easy days. It is difficult days. We have got to stay the course.

Some of the headlines I did read, not in magazines necessarily but some of the periodicals said it turned out to be the most peaceful day in months, this preceding Saturday when it was voting day. Only one of Baghdad's 1,200 polling stations came under attack, another article read. The relatively small number of insurgent attacks compared with the last poll may be a sign of how Sunni involvement in politics can complicate matters for insurgent leaders whose aim is to destroy the political process.

Just as evil unimpeded and unobstructed by good people will spread in an insidious way, so will good and democracy spread just like sunlight during the dawn of a new day as it touches more and more land and spreads. That process is in its infancy in the Middle East, but it is a beautiful thing to see occurring and we can thank God and thank those people who have served their country and given their lives.

Here are other comments. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said the Sunnis are now invested in this process. There is no political base any longer for this insurgency.

I was told by a former general under Saddam Hussein this past spring in Iraq that if you will just stand behind us in America until we get our constitution voted in, until we have an election under the constitution, you will see violence subside.

We are very grateful for all those who have contributed.

THE GROWING NATIONAL DEBT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. COOPER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. COOPER. Mr. Speaker, any day now, the United States of America will have borrowed over \$8 trillion. That is not an occasion to celebrate. That is an occasion to be very worried about the future of our country. \$8 trillion is a fantastic sum of money. To see how long it is, all those numbers stretched out, just look outside the office of any Blue Dog Member of this Congress and you will see a chart like this, because it will show you that as of today, the debt is \$7.989 trillion. That means we are only \$11 billion away from passing the \$8 trillion threshold.

How quickly are we approaching that threshold? We are borrowing almost \$1 billion a day. That means within the next week or two, we will pass the \$8 trillion threshold. Of course, much of the money we are borrowing, we are borrowing from foreigners, and increasingly from the Chinese. So all Americans need to be on alert, because this is something that has never happened before in all of American history. We have had ups and downs, we have had the Depression, we have had the Civil War, but we have never been borrowing money at this rate.

Let me put it in historical perspective. It took the first 204 years of our Nation's history to accumulate \$1 trillion in debt. And now we are doing that every 2 or 3 years. Our Nation's top accountant, David Walker, of the GAO has said that arguably the year 2004 was the worst year in America's entire fiscal history. Why would our top accountant say something like that? First of all, because he believes it is true, and it is also because this Congress promised \$13 trillion worth of new spending in one year, none of which is paid for. Imagine promising \$13 trillion and not even beginning to pay for it.

Later this week under a newly resolved Republican majority, they are planning on increasing the amount of reconciliation that we will undertake by some \$15 billion. That sounds mighty good on the surface, but that is about 2 weeks' worth of this borrowing. I do not think 2 weeks' worth is going